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The Permanent Episcopal Fund



ADDRESS
BY
REV. J. H. McILVAINE, D. D.,
AT A DINNER OF THE
CHURCH CLUB OF THE DIOCESE OF
PITTSBURGH
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by the Rev. J. H. McIlvaine, D. D.,
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The Episcopate is our cherished and distinctive possession. We share it with the Greek and Roman Churches, but among the Reformed Bodies it is ours alone. At the Reformation, they rejected the Episcopate, lost their hold on the historic ministry which had served through fifteen centuries of light and darkness, and their continuity with the Church of the past was in a measure broken. In this great crisis God dealt with our Church in a wonderful way. By His over ruling providence, though again and again it seemed that His purpose would be thwarted, the Episcopate was retained, and the continuity of the Church of England unbroken. This

makes our position in Christendom unique. While we are one with the reformed Churches in their hold on evangelical truth, we are one with the great historic Churches in our hold on the historic Episcopate.

The Episcopate is the organ and instrument of the Catholic Church. Consecrating with its touch all human life, continuous throughout the ages, the Catholic Church gathers up the accumulated treasures of the past, and holds them in trust for the future. Of this trusteeship the Episcopate is the organ. It voices the authority of the whole Church, which may be resolved into Catholic consent. It is not invested with authority which is personal and arbitrary, but is the mouth-piece of the authority of the whole Church. It is a bond of unity and catholicity, linking the Church of to-day with the Church of the past, and the Church throughout the world, carrying us back through all the Christian centuries to the days of the Apostles themselves. Our unity lies not in our relation to a common creed or theological system, but to a living line of living men.

It is the organ and instrument of the Church in its larger aspect, its more general

functions, as distinguished from its local and parochial ministries. The tendency of our Church is towards parochialism. Each parish is a little world in itself, and the thought, the interest, the effort of its clergy are concentrated upon it. This is necessarily so, for concentration is the condition of success to-day in every department of labor, and the cares, the duties, the demands of the parish are so various and exacting as to absorb the life and strength of its ministry. In the Episcopate we have a body of men chosen for their intelligence, experience and devotion, relieved from the cares of a parish, raised to an exalted position that they may have the wider outlook, may devote their thought and energy to the larger interests, may supervise and guide the broader movement of the Church as a whole. In so far as they make their Cathedrals their cures, or burden themselves with the cares of a parish, they defeat this purpose of their office.

In Confirmation and Ordination, the Episcopate is the organ of The Holy Spirit, a special channel of Divine grace, and an instrument of spiritual power. In The Laying on of Hands the Bishop comes literally into touch with every member of the Church, and

it ought to be a vital contact, not only official but personal, bringing spiritual power and a living force for righteousness. It is an office of leadership rather than lordship; ministerial rather than magisterial; its ideal not that of rule, but of service. The Bishop, like his Clergy, is a Minister, a servant of Christ and the Church; a follower of Him Who said, "I am among you as he that serveth." The essential dignity of the office is its service to humanity. I regret very much that we have so largely given up the word Minister, which is generally used in the Prayer Book, and is so full of appropriate meaning and tender association, and substituted the word Clergyman, which has no religious meaning whatever, and no sacred association at all. I regret also that we have so largely given up the word Pastor or Shepherd, and adopted instead the word Rector or Ruler. There is so much that is tender in the relation of the shepherd to the sheep; so much that is sacred and beautiful in the association of the word with the "Good Shepherd, who giveth his life for the sheep," that I cannot understand how anyone with a due appreciation of his office would rather be called a Rector than a Pastor, a Clergyman than a Minister.

The Bishop is above all a Pastor, with oversight not merely of organizations but of souls, with a personal relation to every member of his Diocese, touched with a feeling of their infirmities, no stranger to their sorrows, or unacquainted with their griefs. He is a *Pastor Pastorum*, a Shepherd of Shepherds, to whom his Clergy may come for counsel in their perplexities, for justice in their wrongs, for encouragement in their difficulties, for sympathy in their sorrows, and no one who has not known sorrow can know how tender and sympathetic our Bishop can be to those who suffer.

The Episcopate is a representative office. The Bishop stands for the Church. "*Ubi episcopus ibi ecclesia*," where the Bishop is there is the Church. In every great movement, on every important occasion where there is a desire to recognize and honor our Church, the Bishop receives the recognition and honor, is asked to speak as the mouthpiece of the Church. In the Presbyterian, Methodist and Baptist bodies there is no one who can thus represent the organization, and they suffer for want of this representation. In this community, no two men are more widely known and honored than

Bishop Canevin and Bishop Whitehead. On the many public occasions where he has been called upon to represent the Church, whether demanding humor and wit, scholarship and knowledge of affairs, breadth of view and catholicity of interest, I have never known an occasion when we have not had reason to be proud of our Bishop, if I may be permitted without impertinence to say so. (Applause).

What provision then do we make for this vital office with its essential functions, and how is this provision made? By assessment. Think of it, the most unpopular method that could be devised. That part of our private expenditure, which we regard with least enthusiasm, and we would be glad to get rid of if we could is our taxes. Why? Not because we are unwilling to contribute to the support of the State, but because they are assessed. From the earliest times the tax assessor has been one of the most unpopular and hated of men. I believe it was some little difficulty about the assessment of taxes which brought on our unpleasantness with England that we call the Revolution. It has often been proposed to raise funds for Diocesan

Missions and General Missions by assessment. The proposal has always been rejected on the ground that it would create a prejudice against them and render them unpopular. Yet this is the method employed for the support of our Episcopate. And then it is an assessment under a threat and a penalty. We are told by the Diocesan Convention, that if we do not pay our assessment we shall be excommunicated, cut off from their ecclesiastical fellowship. If the Angel Gabriel came among us and we were compelled to pay him a salary, and the salary was assessed under a threat and penalty, we should have a poor opinion of angels in general and of Gabriel in particular.

How does it work in the various parishes? In my own parish for example, which is regarded as one of the most prosperous, the old property has come back on our hands, we are deeply in debt, the expenditure for maintaining the property and work is very large, with great sacrifice we have been trying for the last two years to lighten the burden and have paid thirty-five thousand dollars of our debt. Our assessment which amounts to \$1,800 is equivalent to an increase of \$40,000 in our indebtedness. We try to smile and

look pleasant about it but are not altogether successful. When the annual financial report is published and placed in the hands of the people, among the items they read "Bishop's salary, \$1,010, assessed." Many ask in their ignorance "What does the Bishop do for us? He never comes here but once in the year." They know nothing about his work of administration. They imagine that all he has to do is to Confirm. There is an immense amount of ignorance among our people on this subject. Take a smaller parish. I have one in my mind where the salary, \$1,300, is raised with difficulty and usually behind hand. The assessment is \$200, and the months when it comes due the Minister has to wait for his salary. Do you suppose the assessment is regarded with enthusiasm, by either the people or the Priest? It diminishes our contributions to Diocesan Missions and to General Missions, for the assessment amounts to more than the contributions to both combined. It puts us at a disadvantage with other Christian Bodies. In the Presbyterian Church, the amount of the assessment for all purposes is 20 cents for each communicant. In my Parish it is \$1.50 for each actual communicant. They say a Bishop

may be a good thing, but he is too expensive a luxury for us. And then in what an uncomfortable position it puts the Bishop to be regarded as a burden instead of a help and a joy. A Bishop said to me recently, "I hate to feel that I am a burden on my Diocese, but unfortunately I cannot die until my time comes."

Moreover under the assessment system, and with our diminished Diocese we cannot continue to make the present generous provision for the office with justice to the other interests of the Diocese. In many things in this Diocese we are miserable sinners, but we can take a little credit to ourselves and feel a little pride about one thing; we lead the whole Church in our support of the Episcopate in proportion to our size and strength. We are one of the smaller Dioceses, with 13,000 actual communicants, and the total amount of expenditures and contributions \$350,000. We are the 46th Diocese in the extent of territory, 16th in the number of communicants, 16th in contributions to missions, 14th in the expenditures for all purposes, and 4th in the salary of our Bishop. There are only three that surpass us, New York with 87,000 communicants and

\$3,000,000 total contributions; Pennsylvania with 57,000 communicants and with \$1,800,000 contributions, and Massachusetts with 42,000 communicants and \$1,000,000 contributions. Many of the Bishops are men of independent means or with small families, otherwise they could not maintain the dignity of the office on their small salaries. We are proud of our position of leadership in this important matter, we are glad to have it so, we should regret extremely the necessity of any change, but there are other important interests in the Diocese as well as this which have to be considered.

If there were no alternative, if we were shut up to this method of assessment, then all that I have said would be useless. There is another and better way by which the whole matter can be lifted to a higher level, whatever is unpleasant and burdensome removed, and the Episcopate, which has come to us as a gift of God, be to us only a blessing and a joy; that is by increasing the Episcopal Fund until the interest of it equals the assessment for this purpose. That is what many Dioceses have done, some of which are smaller and weaker than ours, and others are doing. I may mention some of them. Washington,

Long Island, Rhode Island, Western New York, Central New York, Western Massachusetts, New Jersey, Ohio, Michigan, Michigan City, Bethlehem, Easton, West Texas, Oregon and Montana. These are not all.

Surely what they have done we can do. We are not inferior to them in loyalty, or behind them in generosity. We ought to bring our Episcopal Fund up to \$150,000. Rhode Island, where the whole State is smaller than Allegheny County, has raised its fund to \$200,000, and is still increasing it. Ours at the very least ought to be \$100,000. That is not a small sum, neither is it one to be frightened at, when our familiar talk is of millions, and we hardly regard a man as in comfortable circumstances if he has only a single little million. One parish in the Diocese had no trouble in raising \$300,000 when it wanted a new church, and if that church is ever consecrated it will have to raise \$100,000 more, yet it is not very badly scared. We can raise the sum if we want to. If we think it is a good thing, a thing that ought to be done, it will be done, and there is not the least doubt about it. The trouble is we have not taken any interest in it, we

have not regarded it as of any real importance, for many years it has been the deadest thing in the Diocese. The annual offering, canonically required from each parish, amounts to only about \$300 from the whole Diocese. But it is not dead beyond resurrection. With a little effort we can make it the most living issue of the hour, on which more than any other the welfare and the efficiency of the Diocese depend. This Church Club can work the change if it will. If every one of you will think about it, talk about it, get stirred up about it, if you of the reverend Clergy will go home and talk plainly to your parishioners about it, and not be afraid of hurting their feelings, like the colored preacher who could not allude to the Ten Commandments out of delicacy, we shall be able to get this Diocese enthusiastic about it.

We must get into our heads that this is the one thing to be done, that we can not hold up our heads among other decent Dioceses until it is done. We must hear them calling to us and saying, you must do something about this if you are going to travel in the same class with us. The Diocese of Easton, one-third the size of this, with 4,000 communicants and \$48,000 total contributions

has raised its Episcopal Fund to \$93,000 and is still increasing it. The last report of this Committee closes with these words: "It goes without the saying that the sum of at least \$100,000 of Endowment Fund is vitally necessary for the safe conduct of the financial affairs of the Diocese, and, as a matter of fact, we, the people of the Diocese, are committed to raise this sum; it is a moral obligation, assumed at the time of division of the Diocese, which still rests upon us."

As the matter now stands this sum rests as a debt on the Diocese, the interest of which has to be paid annually as much as if it were a mortgage. By one great effort we can raise the principal, and the interest for all time to come be provided, not by a grudging assessment, but by the free will generosity of a loyal people, who regard the Episcopate as a sacred trust committed to them for the good of the world, with a rightful claim on their reverence, their gratitude, their support.

How can it be done? By each one here not only contributing according to his means, but becoming a financial agent, a corresponding secretary, a traveling solicitor, in season and out of season, giving people no peace and no hope of peace, until like the man whose

children were with him in bed and would not get up out of friendship or charity, but because of importunity gave all that was wanted.

If we cannot raise the whole amount, let us do as New Jersey has done, bond the rest, and give the bonds to people who will pay the interest until they are able to pay the principal. We must rely in part on men to whom God has given the privilege and responsibility of wealth, not for themselves only but in trust for others. We must rely in part on the parishes. I am not looking for trouble, I have enough financial trouble, but I am glad to pledge Calvary Parish for \$10,000 if \$100,000 is raised, or for one-tenth of any amount greater or less. But we must rely chiefly upon men like yourselves, who say this is a good thing, it needs to be done, it ought to be done, it can, it must, and it shall be done.



